

Resuming face to face contact, reporting on progress and remote working

Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

I hope you are keeping well at this time, and for those of you observing Ramadan I'd like to wish you Eid Mubarak for next week.

You may well have heard the announcements from our Prime Minister on the 10th May regarding gradually lifting the lockdown. The Government hope that YR12 students will get some face to face contact with their teachers to support remote learning before the summer (his words were those with examinations next year). These announcements were followed throughout the week by further guidance from the Government. We have been working hard to digest all the guidance and planning the best way for Dixons Sixth Form to resume some face to face contact before the summer. I would like to share some of the detail of that with you now.

Resuming Face to Face contact

Our plan is to invite students in before the summer for some socially distanced, contact with their teachers and tutors. This is so that students can have a detailed review of their progress in subjects and receive expert guidance regarding how to continue making progress via remote learning. We would also like students to meet with their progress tutor and take part in a detailed review of the year and discuss their progression plans. Including their plans to apply to Higher Education through the UCAS system.

I understand some parents will be very keen for their son/daughter to attend these appointments and others will have concerns. While it may not change your concerns, you can be assured that all of our detailed planning will ensure we meet and surpass all the Governments guidelines for resuming face to face contact.

All the latest Government guidance can be found on the <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> website. The most relevant document for students and parents currently is located here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers> and you may well wish to read this.

We are not yet at the stage of having confirmed dates to meet with students, but we would like start holding some of these appointments in June and continue into July.

In line with the guidance, any student in the 'clinically extremely vulnerable' group should remain at home and we will not invite these students to appointments. We will provide a remote review service for these students as well as those who live in a household with a member that falls into the clinically extremely vulnerable category.

You may want to know if attendance is compulsory and what would happen if students did not attend. The Government guidance does make clear for lower year groups that parents will not be penalised. We will extend this principle to our post-compulsory Sixth Form academy (where the onus to attend lies with the student) and there will not be any penalties for choosing not to attend. Though I would stress again every precaution is being taken in our planning.

We will be discussing arrangements directly with our most vulnerable students and families and making sure we have put in place what is needed to support people in this position.

Reporting on Progress

Students already have a login to 'Improve' – this is our data system that allows students to see the grade they are currently working at and their plans to improve. We enter grades six times a year and these are usually based on formal assessments. While we work remotely we are continuing to issue progress grades based on the professional teacher judgement of the ongoing daily remote work. We are busy creating parental logins to the 'Improve' system so that by half term you will be able to see your son/daughter's latest working at grades.

We always grade against full A level standard so at this stage it is normal for students to be working one grade below the final grade they are aiming for. There is an anticipated flight path of improvement.

If your son/daughter is currently two grades below the final grade they wish to achieve that would be a considerable concern. We have colour coded grades with a thermometer colour system to help highlight where progress is hot and where it is cold.

Further to our system for reporting progress we run another system where pastoral details of commendation and concerns are recorded. We are currently working on setting up remote access for students and parents to this pastoral log system - so you will be able to stay informed with the latest information regarding attitude to learning.

Remote Learning

I want to start this final section with a bold statement – In all the meetings I have attended with other providers since the lockdown started I have not heard of any group of students that have displayed the level of engagement with remote learning that our students have. Significant praise is due to our students and teachers for sticking to a daily process of continued learning through supported remote learning. Our teachers have made themselves available to continue to guide and support student progress which is excellent. Whilst our students have not enjoyed the experience of learning away from a classroom environment, the vast majority of our students have continued to make strong progress.

Remote learning will continue until the end of the summer term – so the whole of next half term will continue in the same vein.

Whilst most students have engaged phenomenally well, there are a very small number of students that have not engaged to a satisfactory level. I would like to remind students and parents that this is the way we work – so failure to engage means a student is in breach of their learner agreement and it is therefore their place at our College is in jeopardy. I look forward to writing again in July and reporting that all students are fully engaged.

Please keep in touch if you have any questions, our reception number 01274 089770 remains operational between the hours of 9:00 to 4:00. We can support with any bursary, free school meal or any other enquiries – just give us a ring. Alternatively you can email us via info@dixons6a.com with any queries you may have.

Stay safe

Mark Rothery

Principal

Dixons Sixth Form